



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**First Regional Seafood Development Association Formed**

***Salmon drift gillnet permit holders in Prince William Sound authorized a self-imposed 1 percent tax for marketing***

On May 26<sup>th</sup> results of the first Regional Seafood Development Association (RSDA) Election were completed by Alaska Division of Investments staff and certified by Edgar Blatchford, the Commissioner of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. By a margin of 250 “yes” votes to 68 “no” votes, salmon drift gillnet permit holders in the Prince William Sound authorized a self-imposed one percent tax to provide funding for marketing efforts undertaken by the newly formed Copper River/Prince William Sound Marketing Association. This is the first RSDA to be formed in the state under legislation HB 419 that was signed into law by Governor Frank H. Murkowski on June 21, 2004.

Commissioner Blatchford said the election and subsequent results are encouraging. “I see this election as a boon for a cohesive marketing effort of Copper River salmon,” said Blatchford. “Cooperative marketing efforts in Alaska have proven that if we work together to tell the world about our superior product, we all win.”

The Copper River/Prince William Sound Marketing Association mailed 539 election ballots to eligible voters April 22 and April 27, 2005. Per the Notice of Election, only ballots postmarked by May 13, 2005 and received at the Alaska Division of Investments in Juneau, were accepted. According to law, the association needed returned ballots from 30 percent of eligible permit to certify the election. Nearly 59 percent of permit holders responded and the question passed with 73 percent of respondents approving the tax.

The tax is collected through the state and distributed to the RSDA. The first check should be in the Association's hands by fall of 2006. In recent history, the drift fleet generated about \$20 million annually therefore, the RSDA should expect about \$200,000 annually for its marketing efforts.

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